

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE INTEGRATION OF NHCGL AND NCVAMC INTO THE CAPTAIN JAMES A. LOVELL FEDERAL HEALTH CARE CENTER**

The Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center will be activated on October 1, 2010, and everyone currently employed as a

- permanent civilian at NCVAMC and
- permanent civilian, military or individual contractor at NHCGL will have a job.

The integration of NCVAMC and NHCGL is bringing the health care services of both organizations together under one leadership and governance structure. The Military Construction project is providing the new ambulatory care addition that will physically consolidate clinical care now performed at 200H with that already performed at NCVAMC's main campus. As a result, most people will continue to do the jobs they are currently doing because the number of patients being seen and the number of administrative tasks to perform will remain relatively constant.

### **Q1. I've heard that some Navy employees (Title 5) will be converting to Title 38 (Dept. of Veterans Affairs). What is the difference between Title 5 and Title 38 employees?**

A1. The Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC) will be the first VA/DoD Federal Health Care Center in the nation and will be a totally integrated organization with military and civilian employees working side-by-side to provide patient care to VA and DoD beneficiaries. To ensure that all FHCC civilian employees share the same benefits, including pay, the pending FHCC legislation allows a "transfer of function", which means all current NHCGL civilians would convert to the VA personnel system. Depending upon their current NHCGL position, transferred civilians will either fall under Title 38, Title 5 or Title 38 Hybrid.

- Title 5 personnel are typically administrative and wage grade employees,
- Title 38 are typically nurses, dentists and physicians, and
- Hybrid Title 38 are typically allied health professionals, e.g., social workers, pharmacists, audiologists. A list of occupations falling under Title 38 Hybrid can be found by

For a more complete description of the careers in each category please search the specific Title above on the web page: <http://www.va.gov>.

VA and DoD Human Resource specialists will be available at NHCGL the week of August 31, 2009 to answer general and individual questions staff have about the "transfer of function" from DoD civilian to VA civilian.

### **Q2. Are there any Navy civilian employees who will remain Navy civilian employees (Title 5) after merging into the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in 2010?**

A2. Information Security (IS) and Information Technology (IT) systems personnel will likely remain Navy employees (Title 5) due to DoD requirements that only DoD employees can have programming access to DoD-specific computer software, such as AHLTA. The important piece is that these employees will be part of the Captain James A. Lovell FHCC IM/IT Team and physically on board at the FHCC to support the patient care and administrative hardware and software we all need to provide great patient care and administrative services.

**Q3. When will the staffing plan for the new facility be finalized, and when will people be notified of the official plan?**

A3. Each current NCVAMC permanent civilian and NHCGL DoD permanent civilian, Military or individual contractor employee will be notified by August 31, 2009, that they have a position in the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in October 2010. Some supervisory positions may be delayed as VA and DoD HR subject matter experts will be reviewing those to ensure an appropriate span of control, grade, etc. for each supervisor. This review will occur prior to August 31, and if not all supervisory positions are completed by that time, the rest will be finalized no later than September 30, 2009. Regardless, all supervisors will have a job in the FHCC, the specific assignment just may not be known until the end of September.

**Q4. When the integration is complete in 2010, could someone be put into a position that is different than what they are currently doing?**

A4. Yes: staff could be placed in a position that is different from their current job and we will ensure that staff are only placed in positions for which they are fully qualified and, if necessary, receive any additional training that might be required. An example is a clerk who currently works in the Family Practice Clinic may be assigned to a clerk position in cardiology clinic, or vice versa. Training will be provided to ensure staff are comfortable with their new position.

**Q5. What criteria are going to be used to determine what jobs people will be going into?**

A5. The majority of NHCGL and NCVAMC staff will continue to do the jobs they are currently doing because the number of patients being seen and the number of administrative tasks to perform will remain relatively constant. In a few cases there may be more staff than are now needed because of decreases in workload or economies of scale with the integration. In those few cases, everyone will still have a job, it just may be in a different location, e.g. a clerk from Family Practice may be assigned to a clerk position in cardiology, or vice versa. If you are not assigned to your current job in your August 31, 2009 letter, you may request a personal review with an HR specialist during the week of August 31, 2009. In cases where there are two or more people in line for one

or more positions, the criteria for selection may involve any or all of the following: the staff involved may be asked if they have a preference as to which position they are assigned; if there are no volunteers for a specific position, seniority may be considered, or prior experience of the involved staff. Everyone will be offered a position in the FHCC.

**Q7. What is involved in the transfer/assignments of civilian employees between the Navy and the VA?**

A7: The integration of the Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes and North Chicago VAMC into a single federal health care center is a completely unique situation. When we stand up the new organization October 1, 2010, all current NCVAMC permanent civilians, and all NHCGL permanent civilian, military and individual contract employees will be assigned to the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center -- and working towards a common mission and goal of providing high quality health care to America's heroes.

There is legislation in the National Defense Authorities Act (Senate Bill S.1322) that was introduced June 23, 2009, which authorizes the transfer of current Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes personnel to the new Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center. This legislation will authorize the transfer of all current NHCGL permanent civilian, military and individual contract employees to the Department of Veteran Affairs personnel system. The potential exception will be select NHCGL permanent civilian, military, and individual contract employees who perform Navy-specific functions, e.g., Information Assurance staff, Information Technology staff. Updates on the proposed legislation can be found at the Library of Congress web site: <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

**Q8. Will current Title 5 Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes civilian employees be eligible to transfer to other Navy or DoD facilities? If so, will their highest grade and seniority still apply?**

A8. Any federal employee is free to apply for any vacancy that is advertised within the Department of the Navy, or any other federal agency, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the vacancy announcement. Seniority in terms of years of federal service will be maintained. The grade of any future position is based on the grade level of the position the individual applies for at that time.

NHCGL employees who are not interested in transferring to the FHCC October 1, 2010, may apply for positions at other Navy and/or DoD facilities. Since all employees will be offered positions in the FHCC, there will be no need to transfer people to other Navy and/or DoD facilities. However, if people are interested in moving rather than transferring to the FHCC, their application for jobs in other Navy/DoD locations would be considered, along with those of any other person who voluntarily applies for the job. Because it is a voluntary application, there are no guarantees that a person selected for a new position will be granted their highest previous pay rate. Still, because it's a voluntary application, the applicant is free to accept or reject the job offer. If rejected, it

would not have any adverse impact on their current position or pay. More information about transfers can be found at the Office of Personnel Management Web site:

<http://www.fedquest.com/opmrefs/tei5.htm>

**Q9. How will benefits be impacted when Navy civilian employees (currently Title 5) are merged into the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center and become VA employees (Title 5, Title 38 or Hybrid Title 38)?**

A9. Most insurance and retirement benefits are identical for Title 5 and Title 38 federal personnel regardless of whether they work for NHCGL or NCVAMC. Once converted to the VA Personnel System the Hybrid Title 38 personnel will continue to have the same benefits as Title 5 employees, despite being considered Hybrid Title 38. Attached are documents that describe in detail the benefits for each category of personnel.



Sick Leave Title 5.pdf



Sick Leave Title  
38.pdf



Annual Leave Title  
5.pdf



Annual Leave Title  
38.pdf

**Q10. Will National Security Personnel System be adopted into the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center when it's opened in 2010?**

Answer 10: No: The Department of Defense has placed a moratorium on converting any additional organizations to the National Security Personnel System (NSPS).

Additionally, because of the integration into the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, all current Title 5 civilian employees at the Naval Health Center Great Lakes are exempted from converting to NSPS. More information about NSPS can be found at [www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps).